

THE UTILIZATION OF ONLINE LEARNING FOR ENGLISH CLASSES BASED ON NEED ANALYSIS

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Abstract: This essay will discuss about the application of online learning in English classes. Online learning is one of the latest technology that presents the material clearly by using all online learning features such as chat forum, video or audio. These features can help students to comprehend abstract concept better. However, online learning cannot be effective without well-planned instructional design. Two case studies, discussed in this paper, will analyse the usage of online learning for two different respondents' group. The subjects of these case studies are the students of English Language Education and Islamic Law Department in Islamic University of Indonesia. From the case studies, it is found that the use of online learning in teaching English needs analysis such as students' characteristics, students' need and facilities. This discussion implies that the usage of online learning is not only about using the technology but also considering many instructional aspects. Complete understanding about online learning utilization will help educators to maximize media usage for learning.

Keywords: *Online Learning, English Classes, Need Analysis*

Introduction

Most of English classes in university level today use online learning as one of media for learning. This media provides some features to support English learning such as audio, video, material presentation, chat room for interactive discussion, folders for all files, upload and download icon to add new materials. All of these components will help learners to visualize all abstract concepts and reach learning objective based on achievement indicator. However, using online learning for teaching is challenging because of different circumstances in the learning process itself.

Based on an observation, conducted from September 2013 until Desember 2013, using online learning for English learning needs analysis and specific preparation. During the observation, there were some findings in learning process such as:

- a. Computer literacy of students. Some students were familiar with online learning or technology in general but some others were not. This situation required special training before using online learning system.
- b. Material format. Sometimes online learning could not upload all material format due to file size limit. In fact, English material was not just written paper but also video and audio. Those kind of files could not be uploaded easily. Although some files could be uploaded successfully, it would take longer time to download the files.
- c. Internet connection. Most common problem in using online technology was internet connection. Some students could not upload their assignment due to technical error.

The observation above was the first input data to start further discussion. Now, the paper will be narrowed into two case studies in using online learning for college students in Islamic University of Indonesia. The goal of the observation is to show that online learning is effective and flexible media to be used in different English classes based on need analysis. There are two respondent groups for this study, one respondent group is from English Language Education Department and the other group is from Islamic Law Department. All students are freshmen students from Islamic University of Indonesia. These respondents use similar online learning for one semester. At the end of semester, both classes shows quite similar result although they have different background. From the result, it is assumed that online learning is not just about maximizing technology but also how to use it effectively to reach learning goal based on need analysis. These case studies are expected to give guidelines for lectures about how to use online learning based on need analysis in every class. At the end of the paper, the discussion will also present some practical classroom ideas for lectures in using online learning for English class.

Theoretical Framework

A. Online learning

Online learning concept in this paper is not only about media for learning but also instructional process. So, online learning is defined as the use of internet to access learning materials, to interact with the content, instructor, other learners and to obtain support during the learning process, in order to acquire knowledge,

construct personal meaning and grow from learning experience (Anderson, 2008: 17). From this definition, it is shown that media and learning are integrated in one learning design. The application of online learning in the class can bring positive benefits, for instance: media variation, up-to date information, easy navigation from one document to another document, interactive and convenient communication; and low cost (Smaldino et.al, 2005: 185).

There are many ways to use online learning. It can be used in asynchronous, synchronous or blended learning (Surdjono, 2010: 6). In asynchronous, online learning is used as a media to access material or drilling test and quiz meanwhile synchronous is virtual classroom. Lecture and students do not have to come to the class. They can do all learning activities online from their home or some other places with internet connection. Some of classes in university use blended learning. According to Throne (2003: 16) blended learning is an integration between innovative technological advances and interactive participation in traditional learning.

Case studies in this paper use online learning Edmodo with asynchronous technique. Edmodo is a social learning for educators and their students. Edmodo was developed in 2008 by Nic Borg and Jeff O'Hara, technology administrators from Chicago, USA. Edmodo is popular among 33 millions users around the world (Edmodo Team, 2014: 1). Some features in Edmodo are groups, communication streams, assignments, quizzes, planner, teacher libraries and students backpack, profile page, badges and publisher community. In this study, Edmodo is used to upload and download material, conduct drilling test, comprehension test and quiz.

B. English for Academic Purposes

Most of English classes in university level study English for academic purposes (EAP) because all skills are designed to support academic activities such as finding references, presenting paper, reading books and writing essays. According to students' book from Kathy Cox (2004: IV), EAP is designed to assist students who would like to pursue higher education in university level. EAP helps them to master, criticize, evaluate and produce topics in academic contexts. Usually, each chapter in EAP material includes four English skills from listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Listening focuses on vocabulary and conversation context meanwhile speaking discusses about practical conversation. For reading skill, students will learn to understand texts, continued with writing essays by using many kinds of organizational pattern such as narrative, descriptive, persuasive, etc. These skills will cover various kinds of topic such as education, entertainment, literature, environment, campus life, etc. In addition, students also learn other academic skill such as critical thinking, critical reading and technology.

During the study in Islamic Law Department and English Language Education Department, materials cover integrated skill. Two basic skills are reading and writing. Reading discusses reading comprehension from skimming, scanning, finding topic, main idea and supporting detail, meanwhile writing highlights technique from planning an essay, finding organizational pattern, citation and references. Listening and speaking skill are integrated in those skills by using video presentation and students presentation. Students also use other references such as interview and survey with educational specialist.

Based on the description above, learning English for college students can be an overwhelming process. They have to deal with language, content, academic skill and technology at the time. Online learning can be one media support to create variety in learning because online learning presents material in multimedia format. It presents written text, audio, video, image and animation. Multimedia and online learning are bridge for visualizing abstract concept.

C. Case Study

Case study was conducted from September 2013 until December 2013 (one semester). There were two groups of respondent for this study, they were 38 students from Islamic Law Department (Faculty of Islamic Studies) and 31 students from English Language Education Department (Faculty of Psychology and Socio-cultural sciences). Both of these groups use Edmodo as online learning in asynchronous technique. Students can download all materials or drilling test from Edmodo and they also can upload their assignments in the website.

1. Islamic Law Department (Group 1 = code G1)

Students in Islamic Law Department study English as one of basic requirement for freshman in first semester. They study English for one semester and it is hoped that English can support their academic skill as college students. For some students, English is really hard to master. Based on interview, some students said that they focused on learning Arabic language so they had lack exposure for English. In addition, they did not use various kinds of media in learning, especially online learning. Usually, they studied by using LCD and books. Therefore, it was one of challenges in using online learning because they needed more motivation to study English and practiced how to use the technology at the same time.

2. English Language Education Department (Group 2 = code G2)

Students in English Language Education Department study English as their basic competency to be English teachers in the future. They study English everyday for four years. Most of the students are interested in English, they have high motivation in learning and familiar with technology (gadgets).

These two different kind of students used similar technology to study English in one semester. The procedures of Edmodo utilization are:

1. Need analysis in the first meeting (Interview and Observation) for G1 and G2
 2. Collecting findings.
G1: English is difficult. Students are not familiar with technology usage.
G2: English is interesting. Students are familiar with many kinds of technology.
 3. Follow up.
G1: Brief description about Edmodo in almost every meeting.
G2: Brief instruction about Edmodo in the first meeting.
 4. Impact.
G1: The students are still confused and they need ongoing instruction.
G2: Most of the students sign in for edmodo account without further instruction.
- Based on the table above, different character of students can lead to different respond.

During the course, students from G1 needs more instructions than G2. Lecture gave brief description about Edmodo in allmost every meeting, especially for assignment submission. On the other hand, RG 2 could submit their assignment without further training. After completing all assignments in one semester, it is found that both groups have quite similar result without big significant different. The table below shows the recapitulation of assignment submission in one semester:

Table 2. Assignment Recapitulation

	A 1	A 2	A 3	A 4	Total	Average
RG 1	33	29	30	22	114	28,5
RG 2	26	25	33	33	117	29,5

Value Difference: $29,5 - 28,5 = 1$

Based on the table above, online learning can be a potential media for learning in different kind of situation. Although G1 and G2 have different background in English competency and computer literacy but it is still possible to integrate online learning in the class.

Conclusion

Online learning can be a solution if it is followed by clear prosess from need analysis, clear instruction and aproprate objective. There are some practical strategies for lectures in using online learning for a course such as designing clear instruction from the first meeting, giving training to improve students' computer literacy and choosing relevant material for online learning. In addition, lectures do not have to use all features in online learning system. Some features can be used for tutorial, some other features are for discussion and the others can be used for games, quiz or drilling test. It means that online learning is not just about using the tool or media for learning but it is about using online learning to reach learning goal.

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Bibliography

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